



Picturesque America; or, the land we live in

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

Bryant, William Cullen

New York, 1874

Northern New Jersey.

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SCENES IN NORTHERN NEW JERSEY.

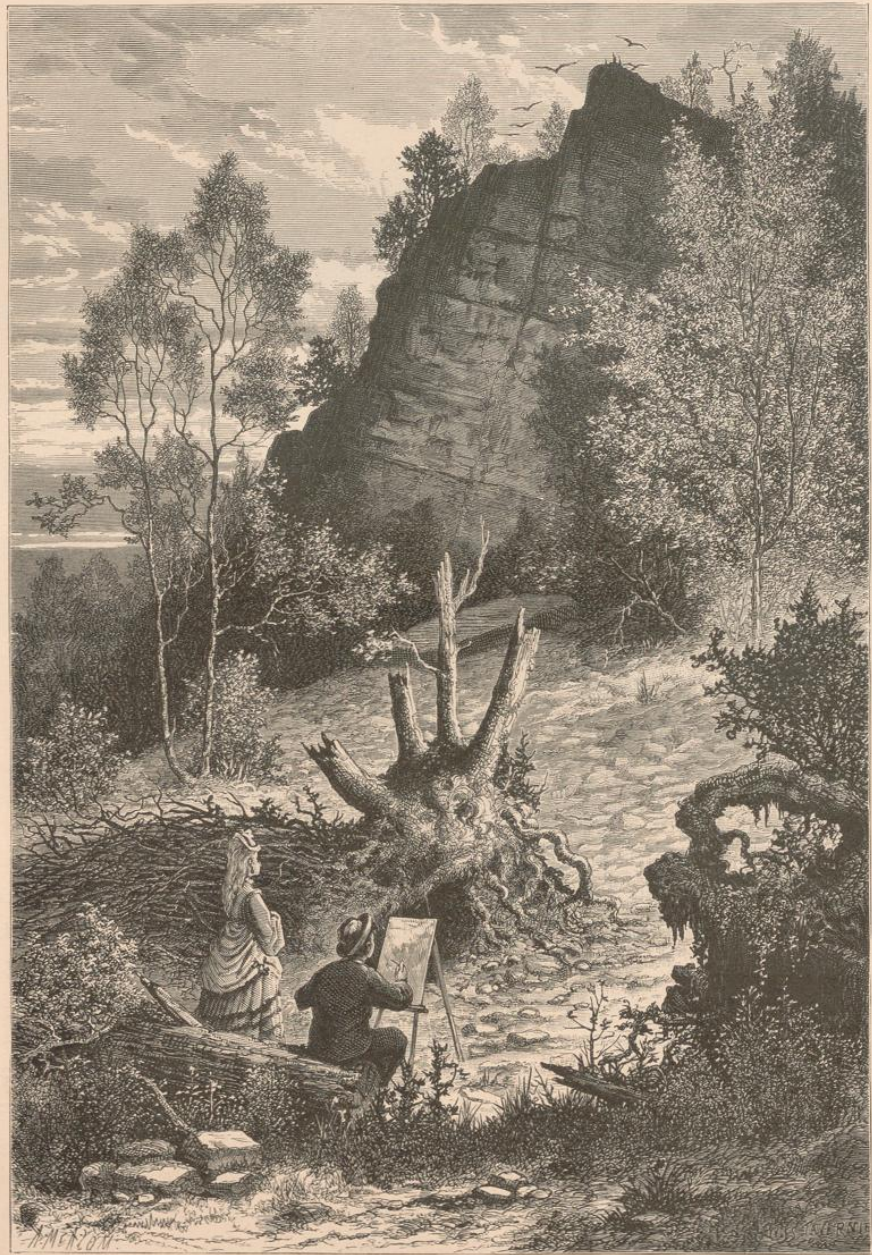
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JULES TAVERNIER.



Scene on the Passaic.

ALTHOUGH New Jersey, ever since her admission into the Union, has been the butt for the sarcasm and wit of those who live outside her borders, the gallant little State has much to be proud of. Her history is rich in instances of heroism, especially during the Revolutionary period. Her prosperity is far greater than that of many noisier and more excitable communities. Her judiciary has made the name of "Jersey justice" a terror to the evil-doer. Her territory includes every variety of scenery, from the picturesque hills and lakes of her northern to the broad sand-wastes of her southern counties. Those interested in the statistics of industry will find much that is worthy of notice in her iron-works and other great manufacturing establishments, while those who seek the indolent delights of summer enjoyment cannot fail to be charmed with her famous and fashionable sea-side resorts.

The picturesque features of New Jersey lie almost entirely in the northern section of the State, and are within easy reach of the great metropolis. Indeed, thousands of



EAGLE ROCK, ORANGE.

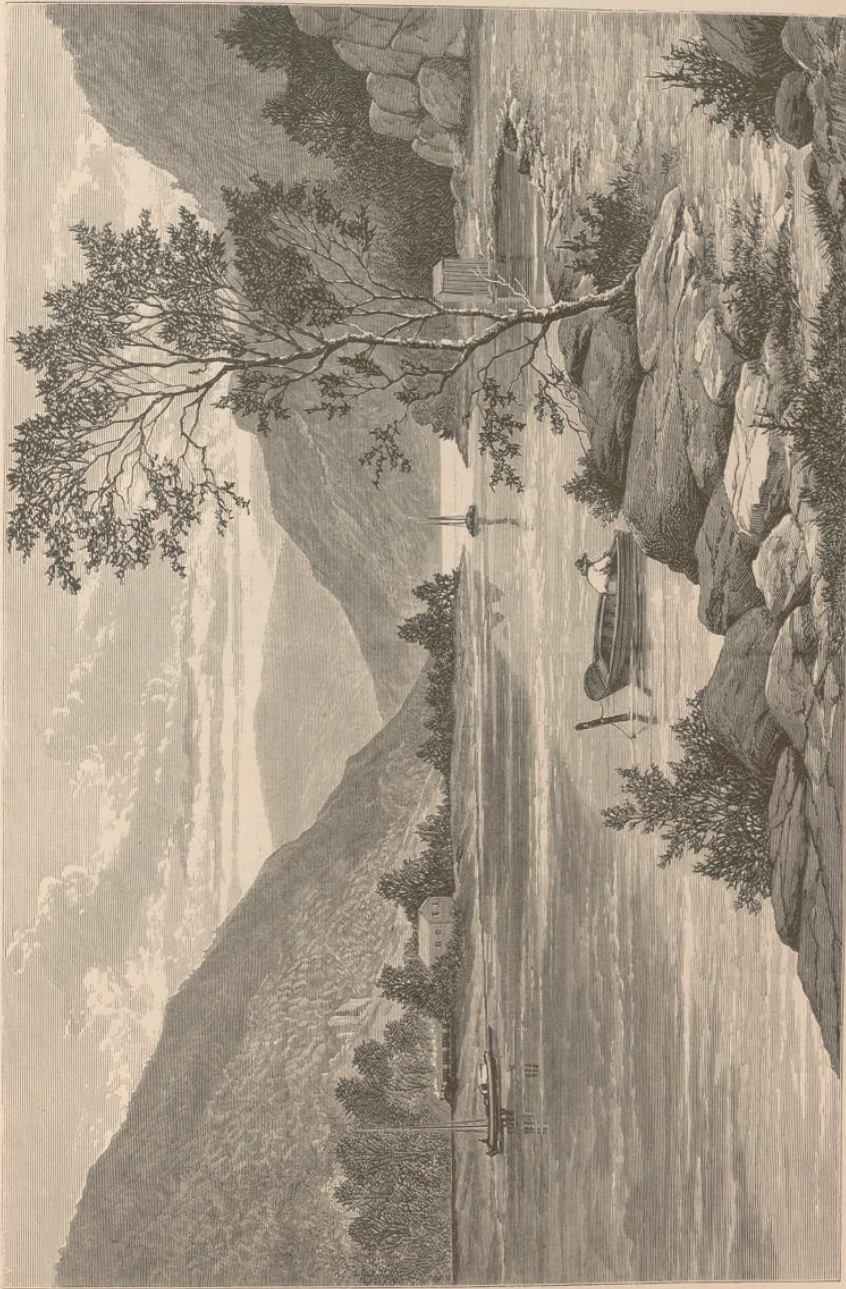


WASHINGTON ROCK.

the business-men of New York live in the midst of these picturesque scenes, an hour's ride serving to convey them from the turmoil of city occupations to the serene quiet and sylvan charms of rural life. Jersey City and Newark are flourishing cities, with populations of their own; but the multitudinous smaller towns and villages, within a radius of fifty miles, owe their existence entirely to the surplus population of New York.

A ride of seven or eight miles brings the traveller from the valley of the Hudson to the valley of the Passaic, the latter being bounded, at some distance inland, by the abrupt, precipitous range of hills known generally as Orange Mountain. A dozen years ago, this mountain was a wild, uninhabited region. The Dutch farmers who originally settled in this vicinity were content to nestle in the grassy valleys, preferring for their homes the quiet plains rather than seeking for picturesque nooks on the frowning hillside. They built solid one-story houses of gray-stone, covering them with overhanging roofs, and caring in their domestic arrangements rather for comfort than for elegance. Many of these simple yet substantial structures are standing at this day, giving shelter to the descendants of those who built them. Others have passed into the hands of city-folk, and have been decked out with verandas, furnished with larger windows, and even provided with Mansard roofs, so that it is difficult to recognize in these reconstructed edifices the solid old farm-houses of a hundred years ago. In no part of the country has speculation in real estate been carried on more vigorously or more successfully than in Northern New Jersey, and many a hard-working farmer has found himself unexpectedly rich through the marvellous rise in the value of the land which his fathers considered as only adapted to the raising of cabbages or potatoes. In the last few years, railroad communication has increased to such an extent that almost every farm in Northern New Jersey enjoys the advantage of being "near the station"—a privilege which only those who live in the country can fully appreciate.

One of the first and most successful attempts at landscape-gardening on a large scale, in this country, was made by the late Llewellyn S. Haskell, a gentleman who was especially enamoured of rural life, and who to ample means and unflagging energy added a finished and cultivated taste. He purchased a large tract of land on Orange Mountain, and laid it out as a park, in which he and his friends built a variety of elegant private residences. No attempt was made to deprive this region of its wild primeval beauty. Roads were laid out, winding in gentle curves amid the rugged rocks and through the rich and picturesque forests. Near Eagle Rock, the proprietor of this superb domain erected his own home, at a point which commands a view more extensive than any other in the vicinity of New York. Beneath the spectator lies the cultivated valley, covered with villages, and partially bounded by the Bergen Hills. To the south can be seen the gleam of the waters of the bay of New York and of the Atlantic Ocean, and, under favorable atmospheric circumstances, the spires of the great city. The whole eastern slope of the mountain, for several miles in length, is dotted with resi-



RAMAPO RIVER.

dences, most of which command this delightful view, which increases in diversity and beauty, though not in extent, as you go northward into the prosperous town of Montclair.

At the foot of the mountain there is a well-kept road, which is a favorite drive for the residents of the vicinity, affording as it does, in the warm summer afternoons, that



Terrace House and Thorn Mountain.

“shadow of a great rock in a weary land” of which the Scriptural poet spoke so many thousand years ago; and, at the same time, offering a goodly view of the level plain. From this road—though it is at a much lower elevation than the point of view suggested in our engraving—Eagle Rock is seen towering up in majestic grandeur, as bold and rugged as when only the red-men inhabited this charming region. The eagles, which



BREAKWATER, RAMAPO.

gave it its name, are now but seldom seen; yet the hoary, scarred projection seems to the eye as distant and as desolate as when it was indeed the home of the king of birds.

Still more striking in appearance, and more picturesque in formation, is Washington Rock, on the same range of hills. This rock is divided by a deep chasm into two parts, one of which has evidently been cleft from its fellow by some great convulsion of Nature, and has fallen several rods down the slope of the hill, where it stands firm and upright. From this rock it is said that George Washington viewed the land below, eager



Little Falls.

to trace the course of the British army. At that time the plain was cultivated, it is true; but the pretty little village of Dunellen, which to-day forms so pleasing a feature of the scene, was then unthought of, and the mountain itself was as wild and uninhabited as the far-distant Sierras. Washington Rock is now a favorite resort for picnic-parties, and for the tourist who seeks to gratify his taste for the picturesque.

Farther to the north of the State is the Ramapo River, a stream which finds its way between high hills, and is frequently made use of for manufacturing purposes. Over one of the dams which obstruct its course, the water flows in a graceful cascade, which, but for its prim regularity, would equal in its beauty of motion the natural falls which



THE PASSAIC, BELOW LITTLE FALLS.

are ever such a source of delight to the lover of the beautiful. To such, indeed, the Ramapo offers many attractions. The stream, in its numerous curves, constantly presents fresh points of view. The hills—sometimes abrupt, sometimes rolling—here and there recede from the river's edge, leaving grassy fields or rocky plateaus, on either of which it is a pleasure to stroll, listening, as did Sir Bedivere, to—

“ . . . hear the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

The sails on the river add to the variety of the scene; the fisherman's row-boat imparts to it notable life and vivacity; and the wreathed smoke of the locomotive does not seem wholly inharmonious. In fact, the railroad-train has become quite a prominent incident in our river-scenery. Railroads naturally follow the river-courses, and they give to the wildest and most unfrequented valleys a touch of human life and interest which greatly adds to the effect of mountain solitudes. Heard in the far distance, the whistle of the locomotive sounds really musical. The rumbling of the approaching train—now enhanced by a sudden echo, now deadened by a plunge into a tunnel—grows nearer and stronger, till, as the long line of cars passes by, it becomes less and less distinct, and, dying away in the distance, renders the solitude of the hills, by contrast, still more lonely. There is in all this a certain picturesque effect of sound—if the expression may be allowed—which harmonizes well with the rural scenery. When a railroad was first projected along the shore of the Hudson River, the occupants of the elegant country-seats which adorn the green banks of that noble stream, were highly indignant at what they deemed an invasion of their rights, and an outrage upon the quietude and beauty of their homes. Audubon, the celebrated naturalist, who lived on the Hudson, was so affected by this innovation that his anxiety on the subject is said to have shortened his life. To-day, however, no one complains of the passing trains, which, in fact, add a peculiar element of human interest to the wildest and grandest scenery.

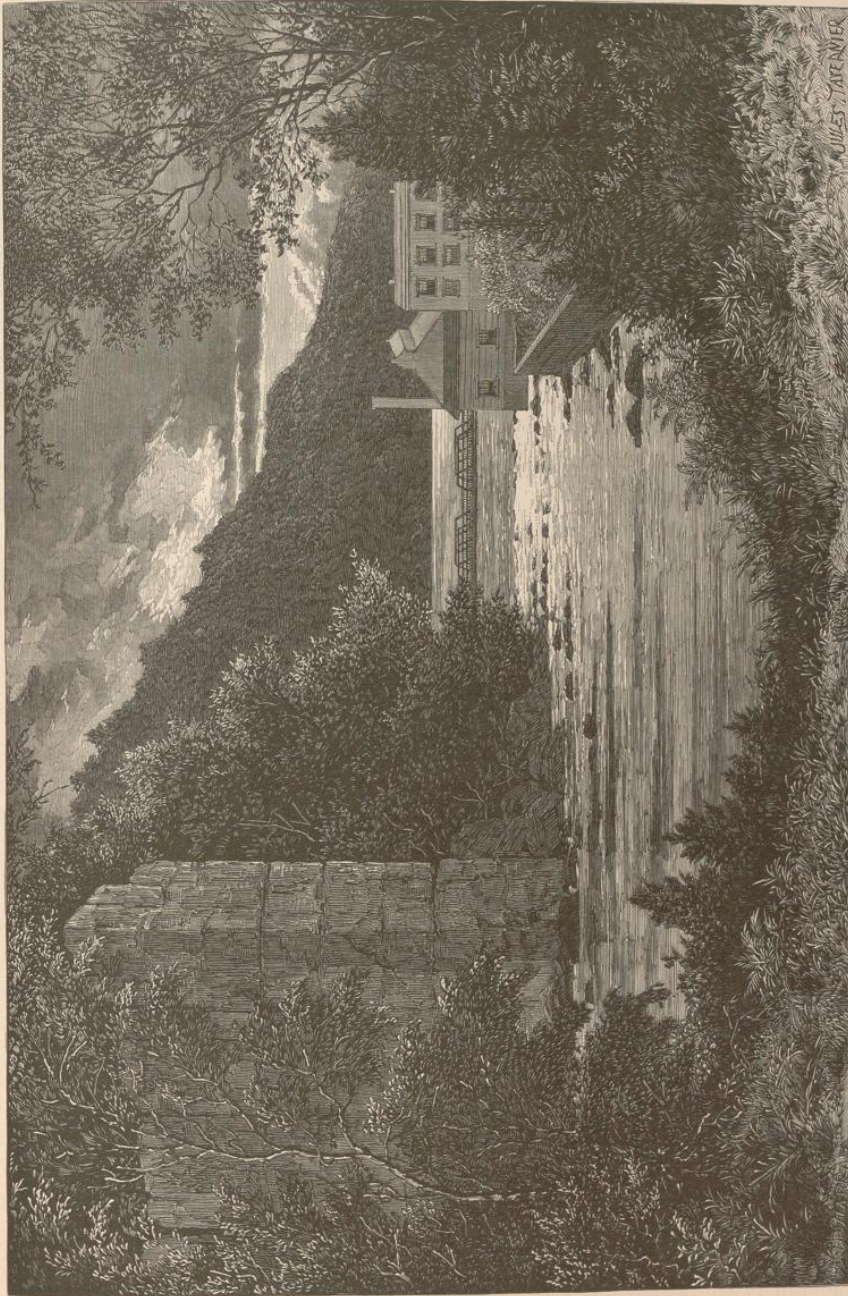
There are many other points of picturesque beauty in Northern New Jersey, to which we can only briefly allude. Greenwood Lake, on the boundary-line between New Jersey and New York, is sometimes called the Windermere of America, and, in its quiet, graceful beauty, will remind the traveller of the famed English lake. It has of late years become a recognized place of resort—perhaps the most noted in the State, with the exception of Cape May, Atlantic City, and Long Branch.

Among the hills and streams of the section of country to which these few pages are devoted may be found many attractive nooks—many quietly-beautiful homes, like Terrace House, which is overlooked by a towering mountain-peak, worthy of companionship with the mountains of New Hampshire. But, as a general thing, the scenery of Northern New Jersey is on a less extensive scale. The hills, rugged and wild as they may be, after all, cannot fairly be called mountains. The lakes are small, and the nar-



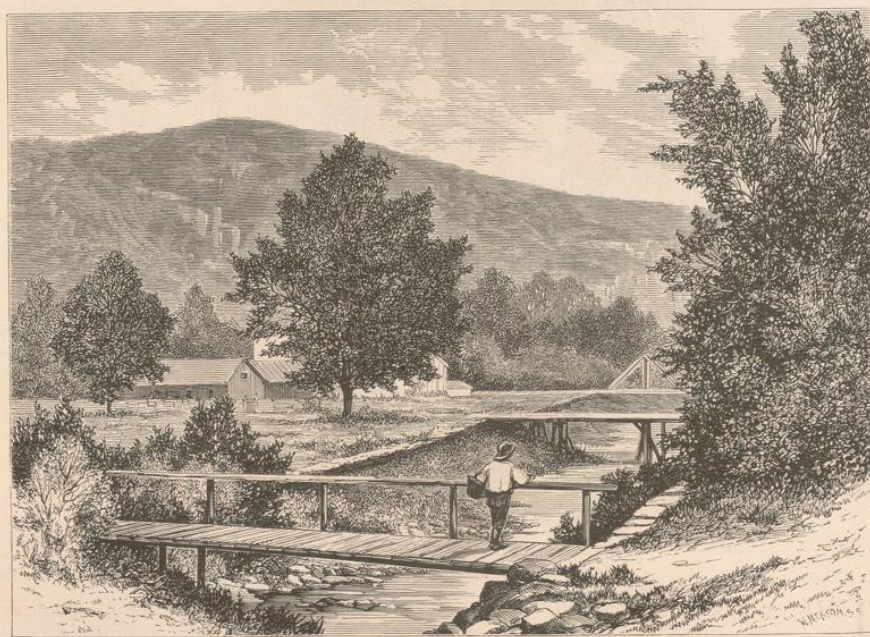
PASSAIC FALLS.

row rivers find devious paths among their rocky barriers. Principal among these streams is that on which the largest city of New Jersey is situated. Indeed, the Passaic, to which allusion is made, is, not only in its historic interest, but its great length, breadth and commercial importance, a notable exception among the rivers of New Jersey. For, though rising in and flowing for much of its course through a hilly and rock-bound region, the Passaic River is the most tortuous and the most sluggish, as well as the longest, stream in the State. From its extreme source, in the upper part of Morris County, it flows, as gently as "sweet Avon," between the hills of that county and Essex, taking toll of Dead River as it passes the base of Long Hill, and thence stealing its way, with scarcely a ripple, through narrow vale and broad valley, for twenty miles among the defiles of the Horseshoe Mountain, till it receives the tribute of the vivacious Rockaway. Stimulated apparently by the instillation of this lively little rock-stream, or perhaps awakened to the sense of an impending crisis in its fate, it emerges from the last defile with a sudden start, and almost rushes for a few miles toward its first leap over the rapids of Little Falls, nearly opposite the somewhat uninteresting manufacturing village of that name. This first saltatory experiment of the Passaic, though comparatively of a gentle character, is still not devoid of picturesque beauty, or even of a certain grandeur. The fall is more than three hundred feet broad, and is formed with an obtuse angle opening down-stream, over which the river, just pausing to smoothe its ruffled surface on the brink, leaps in two broad sheets of foam-capped, spray-clouded water, and then glides away serenely to perform a similar feat a short distance lower down, at the Second Fall—the two being possibly in the nature of rehearsals for the final acrobatic struggle at the Great Passaic Falls, some six miles below. The scenery along the river, during its leisurely loiterings through the mountains, and its scarcely more hurried voyage athwart the valleys of its upper course, is of that peculiar character which belongs to such regions. Tall masses of rock rise abruptly, at intervals, on its banks, like great buttresses, or still more like the massive and forest-grown ruins of mighty rock-structures, such as are found here and there along the water-courses of the wondrous Southwest. The river-bed is rocky; yet the flow is hardly fretted into ripples by these up-cropping barriers, but seems to hold the even tenor of its way with a quiet disregard of obstacles that is eminently suggestive of a serene philosophy. At Little Falls the Morris Canal crosses the river by a handsome stone aqueduct; and from the summit of this the artistic loungers may obtain a charming view of the stream, winding down between overhanging hills of greenery, and jutting escarpments of cedar-crowned trap-rock and sandstone, toward Great Falls, and the more level reaches of the Paterson plains and the salt-marshes of Newark. Before reaching this point, however, the river undergoes a second tribulation in the shape of another fall and rapid, which rouse its sluggishness into momentary and picturesque fury, and over and down which it roars in foamy wrath, scarcely subdued in time to collect itself for the struggle five miles beyond. But it does



THE PASSAIC BELOW THE FALLS.

subside, and, assuming once more a tranquil air of unconsciousness, rolls smoothly to the verge, and then plunges boldly, in one unbroken column, over the precipice of the Great Falls, dropping, like a liquid thunder-bolt, sheer ninety feet into a deep and narrow chasm of less than sixty feet in width, through which it dashes and foams in short-lived madness, to rest and glass itself upon a broad, still basin, hollowed by its own labors from the solid rock. After leaving this basin, the river is vexed no more, but flows pleasantly past many thriving towns and hamlets, giving of its tide to turn the wheels of industry here and there, spanned by bridges of many forms and purposes, from the elaborate iron arch of the railway to the rude rusticity of the wooden foot-bridge. Its path now lies amid rich uplands and orchards, teeming fields, and the dwellings of a prosperous agricultural community. But there are still many picturesque glimpses of a wilder nature along its course, and many a spot known to the disciples of the "gentle Izaak" as giving and fulfilling the promise of excellent sport and the added charm of attractive scenery. From Paterson to Newark the shores spread like an amphitheatre covered with verdure, dotted thickly with dwellings and the monuments of successful enterprise and industry, giving it the appearance of a watery highway through a picturesque succession of close-lying villages and centres of busy life.



Near Greenwood Lake.